REMARKS

The above amendment and these remarks are responsive to the FINAL office action of Examiner Gerald J. O'Connor, mailed 12 Feb 2004.

Claims 1-3 and 14-23 are in the case, none being allowed.

Response to Amendments

Applicants have corrected the amendment, hopefully to comply with 37 CFR 1.121.

35 U.S.C. 103

Claim 1-3 and 14-23 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Gardner et al. (US 5,758,327).

Applicants invention involves the loading of commodity codes and charts of accounts, and expands on that concept in

two ways not taught by Gardner et al.

First, the loading of commodity codes and charts of accounts has been disassociated from the catalog concept completely.

Second, applicants provide administrators the ability to connect commodity codes with a subset of the accounting codes, as appropriate for the business and country. In this way, a requester ordering an item that is not found in a catalog can still submit a requisition with complete and accurate accounting information. This second expansion on the concept is at the core of applicants' invention, which is front-end business logic and validation. It isn't enough to just load the commodity codes and charts of accounts. The requester needed to be provided a method by which he would be able to enter valid data without a painful process of trial and error. There are hundreds of accounting codes in applicants' chart of accounts. By giving an administrator the ability to link a handful ("selects from req/cat system database valid accounts with descriptions for a given commodity...") these codes with a given commodity code, and furthermore to provide a meaningful description of the accounting code, applicants have enhanced the shopping

experience for the end user, whether he is ordering from a catalog or not. Once a commodity code is selected, whether from the catalog or by commodity description only, the user then has a short list of just a few account codes (those selected by the administrator), along with a description of when each should be used, for selection. In this way, applicants have ensured that requisitions being sent for approvals are not rejected due to invalid accounting codes, and requisitions that are approved and sent to the processing system (ERP) also do not fail validation upon automated entry.

This process is explained in applicants' specification, as follows:

Thus, in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the invention, a method is provided for creating a valid chart of accounts from which an administrator 184 can facilitate and enable a requisitioner to select a valid general ledger account. First, there is push from an enterprise (erp) system a chart of accounts 140 with descriptions to a req/cat system database. The administrator selects from req/cat system database valid accounts with descriptions for a given commodity

and purchase time period, and then pushes the selected account/description tuple to the company commodity groups, thus completing the setup of the commodity documents 150 to be used in the requisition creation process. A company commodity document 150 created by administrator 184 may include for each commodity code under each company, commodity code 152, which is a very broad catagory, short description 190, long description 191 (from procurement organization 182), key words 192, approvers 193, financial information 194 (including purchase type 198, and general ledger account 199), route-to buyer 195 (by plant association), preferred supplier 196 (which associates the commodity code to a catalog 158), and special handling code 197 (with drop list including, for example, skills matching, obi, administrative services) -- all used to drive the customer to the correct commodity. (Specification, page 30, line 3 ff.)

Applicants have amended each of the independent claims to more specifically recite the description maps account codes selected by said administrator to a given commodity code from an associated accounting system for use by a requester to select the correct general ledger account when

doing financial validation on a requisition for commodities.

In the rejection, for example, of claim 1, the Examiner states that Column 5, line 57 through Column 6, line 13 teaches that an administrator associates valid account codes from the global chart of accounts to specific commodity codes. In fact, Gardner is here referring to activities performed by the REQUESTER and not by the ADMINISTRATOR. Applicants claims specifically address the actions that an administrator takes to make the buying experience easier for the requester.

Further, the Examiner states that Column 6 lines 64-67 teaches that the administrator associates a subset of the account codes to a specific commodity in a specific company.

The teaching of Gardner to which the Examiner refers relates to attachments to a requisition that a user has created. Gardner is describing keeping attachments associated with a requisition as it travels through the approval process.

"In step 50, the attachment is routed. Typically, the attachment is transmitted with the requisition to

each person in an approval process. Alternatively, the private attachment is transmitted only to the designated individuals." (Gardner, et al., Col. 6, line 64-67.)

On the other hand, applicants invention relates to the administrator subsetting (by selecting) a general ledger system's chart of accounts into subsets (of selected accounts) that are usable and meaningful for the requester before they (the requesters) ever start the requisition process. This is brought out in all of the claims by language such as "administrator selecting from said requisition catalog system database valid accounts with descriptions for a given commodity and purchase period for said given company."

The Examiner states that Gardner et al. "do not specifically disclose that the chart of accounts includes descriptions..." (Office Action, page 3), but states that such "are well known, hence obvious, elements to include in any system of requisitioning accounting" (emphasis added). Applicants traverse this conclusion, which is apparently based (implicitly) on the Examiner's personal knowledge, or else draws on applicants' own disclosure. Accordingly, the

Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the rejection of Claims 1-3 and 14-23. However, if the Examiner maintains this rejection, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner provide an affidavit attesting to this statement pursuant to 37 CFR 1.104(d)(2).

With respect to claims 3, 17, and 19-23, the Examiner observes that Gardner et al. "do not disclose the recited details of of the descriptions of each commodity codes", but then asserts that "the recited elements of the commodity code descriptions are all well known, hence obvious, elements to use in any commodity code description." (Office Action, page 14). Applicants traverse this conclusion, which is apparently based on the Examiner's personal knowledge, or else draws on applicants' own disclosure. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the rejection of Claims 1-3 and 14-23. However, if the Examiner maintains this rejection, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner provide an affidavit attesting to this statement pursuant to 37 CFR 1.104(d)(2).

With respect to claims 2, 16, and 18, these claims are dependent upon claims 1, 14, and 15, respectively, and are distinguished from from Gardner as previously discussed.

In essence, the rejection of claims 1-3 based on Gardner, et al. represents hindsight reconstruction of Gardner, et al. based on applicants' own disclosure, and thus does not satisfy the requirements for the prima facie case which the Examiner must provide.

Applicants urge that claims 1-3 and 14-23 be allowed.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Applicants urge that the above amendments be entered and the case passed to issue with claims 1-3 and 14-23.

The Application is believed to be in condition for allowance and such action by the Examiner is urged. Should differences remain, however, which do not place one/more of the remaining claims in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to phone the undersigned at the number provided below for the purpose of providing constructive assistance and suggestions in accordance with M.P.E.P. Sections 707.02(j) and 707.03 in order that allowable claims can be presented, thereby placing the Application in
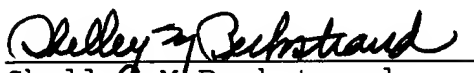
condition for allowance without further proceedings being necessary.

Sincerely,

Jean-Paul Chollon, et al.

By

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